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Academic Year 2023-24

Apr 18th, 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Getting Unstuck: Moving Forward in Completing Your Dissertation or Thesis

Robyn Hess

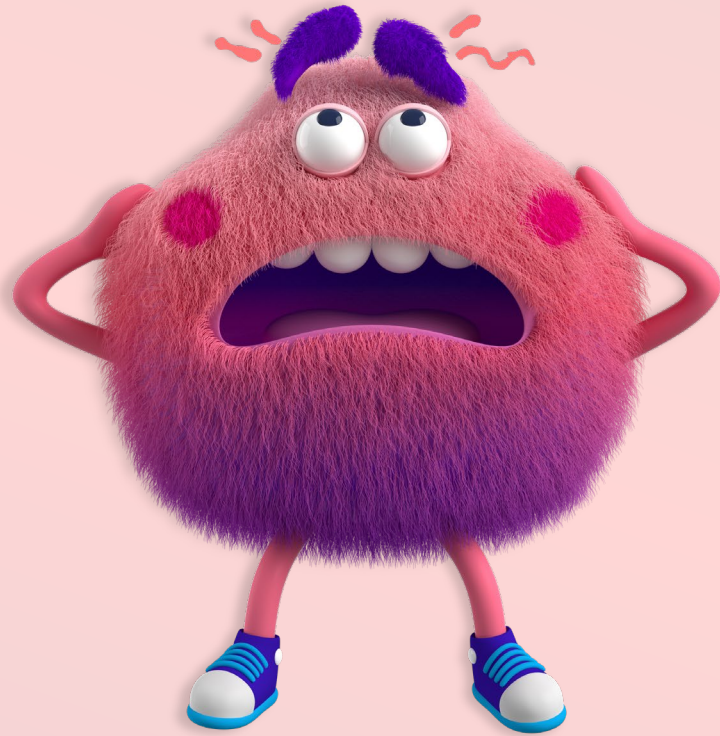
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Getting Unstuck

Moving Forward in Completing Your
Dissertation or Thesis

Scholarly writing is a process

An actual picture of me working on my dissertation



Getting Unstuck

Completing a thesis or dissertation is a long, complex endeavor

Where are some of you at in your writing process – just getting started, working on proposal?

Common areas where people get stuck

1. Deciding on a project/research question
2. Conducting a review of the literature
3. Writing up your proposal
4. Writing up your final chapters



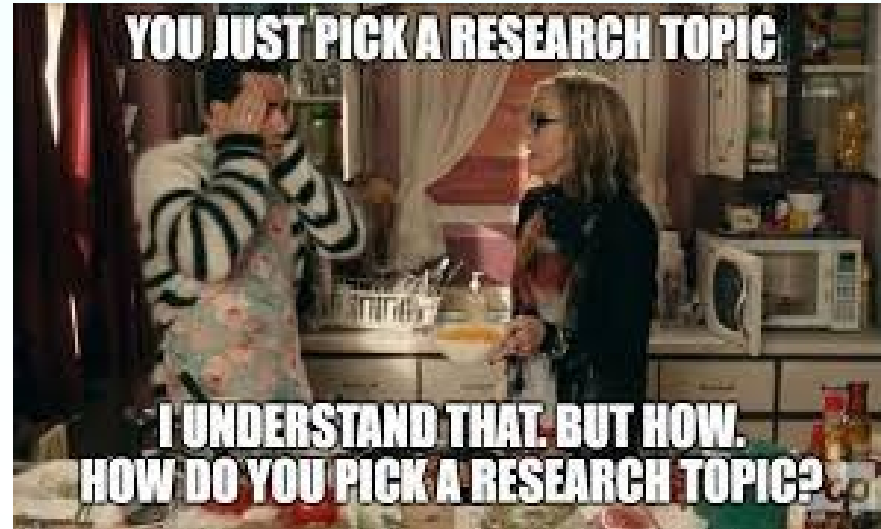
Deciding on a Project/Research Question

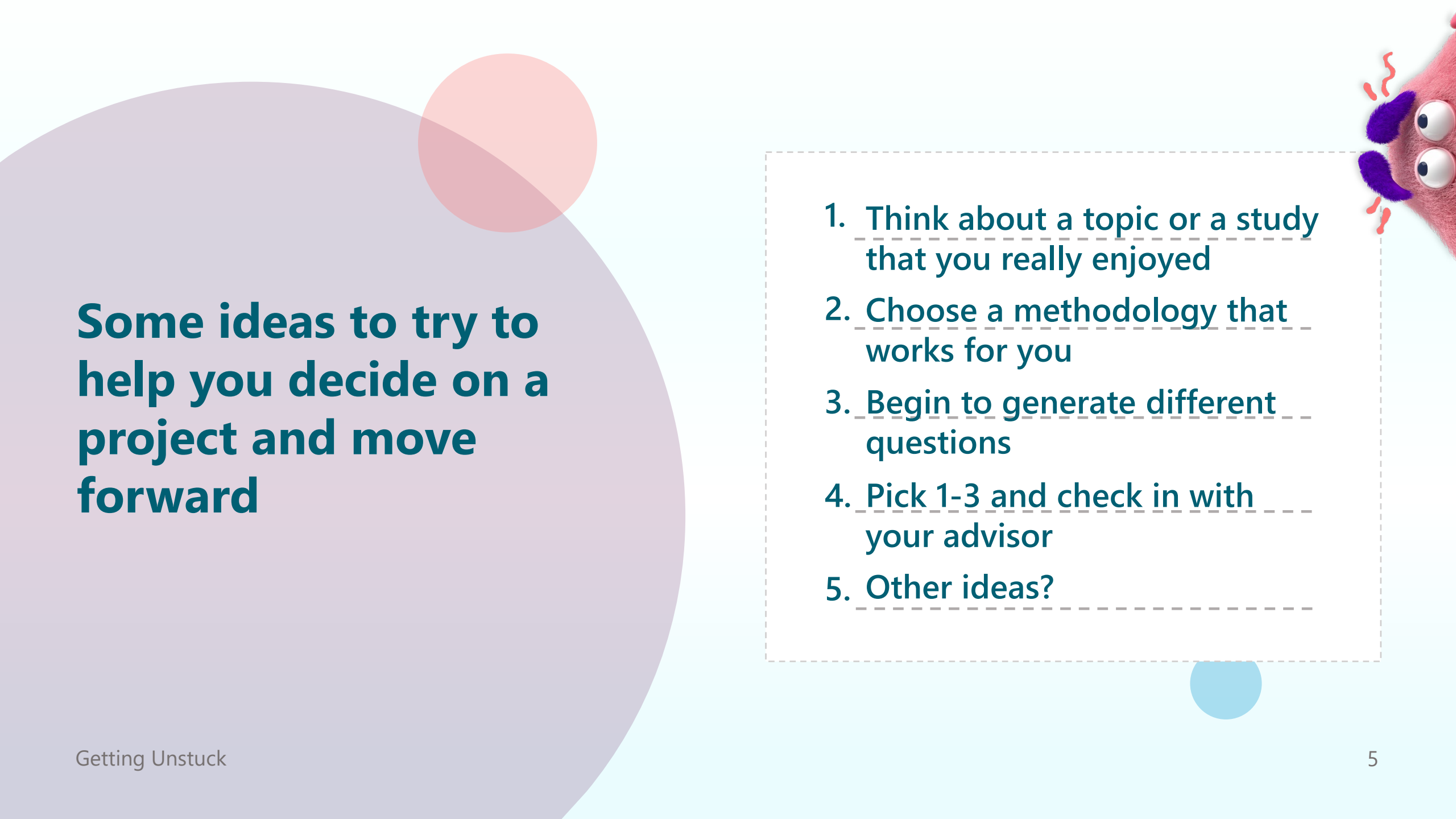
What is interesting to you?

What is doable?


Where will you have supports?

Managing expectations





Some ideas to try to help you decide on a project and move forward

- 
1. Think about a topic or a study that you really enjoyed
 2. Choose a methodology that works for you
 3. Begin to generate different questions
 4. Pick 1-3 and check in with your advisor
 5. Other ideas?

Conducting a Review of the Literature

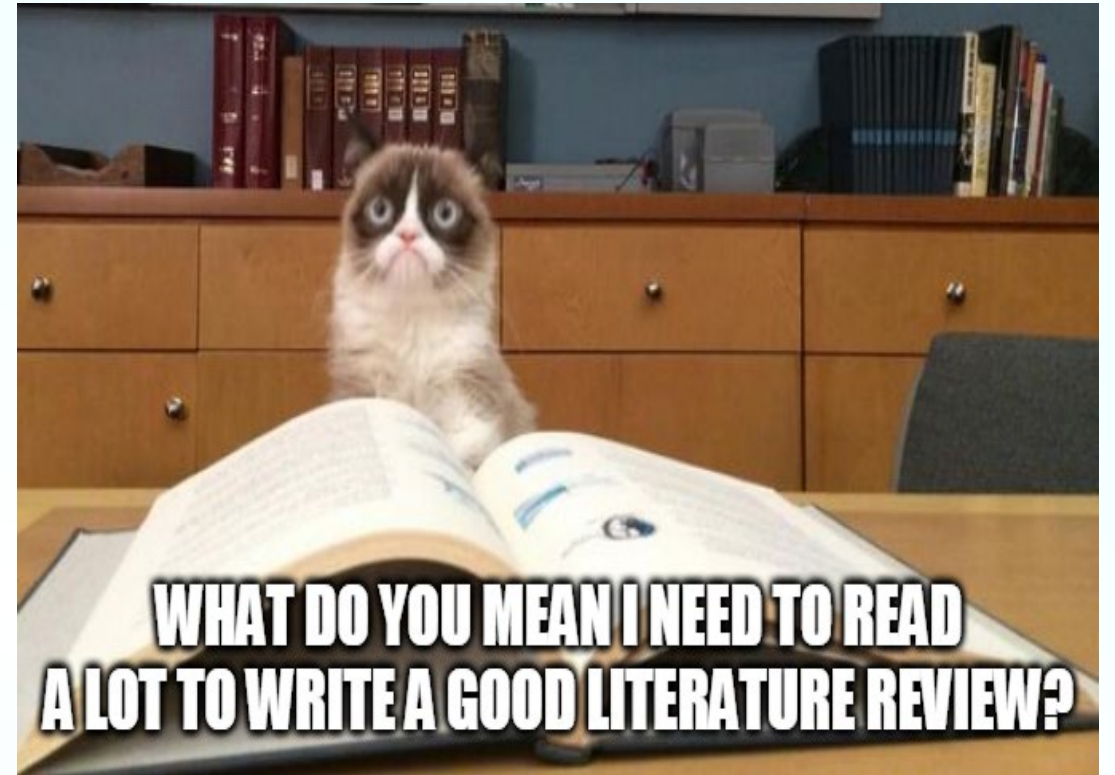
Everything is relevant, right?

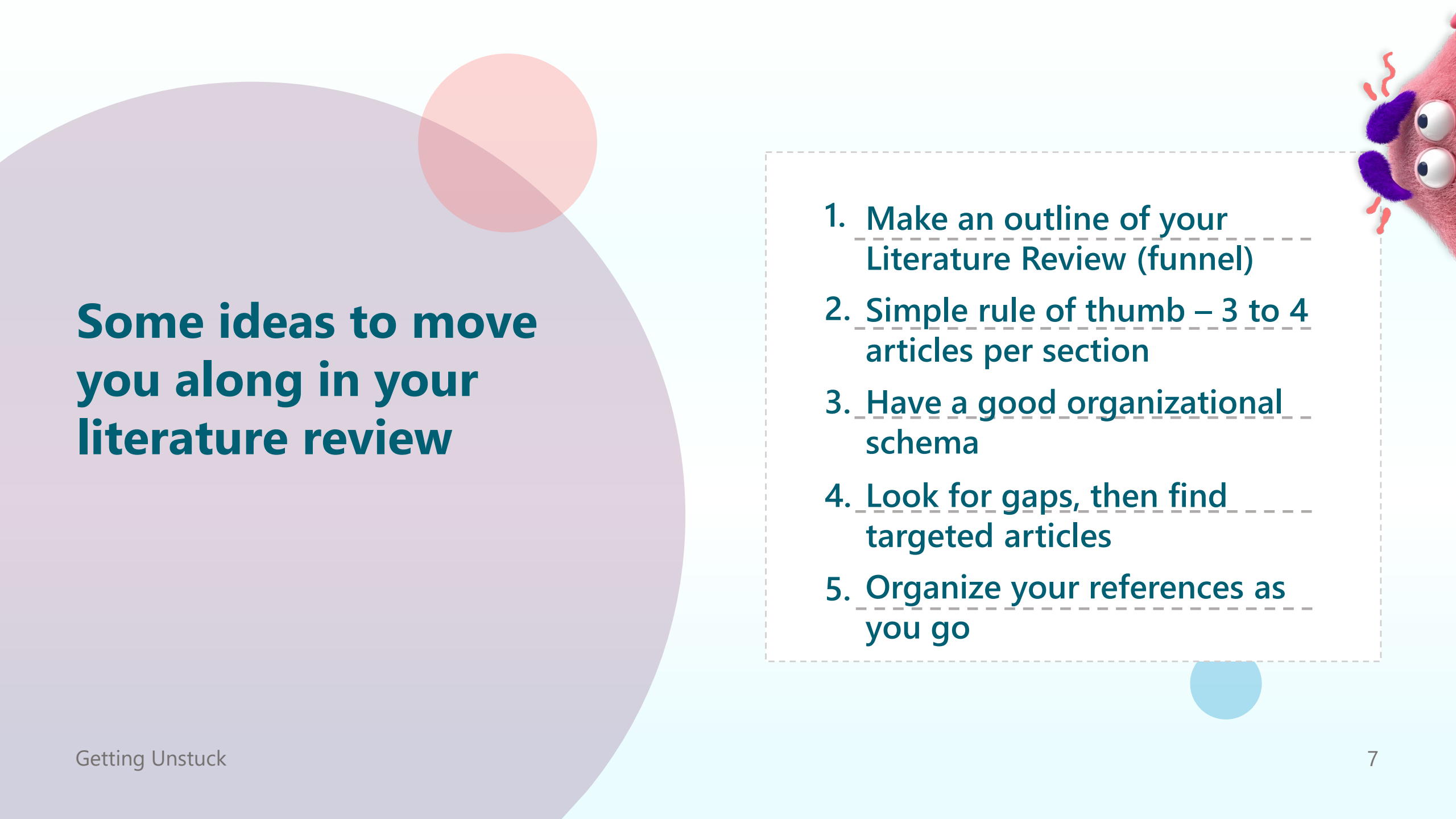
How deeply should I cover each topic?

There might be some new article that I must find.


It is okay to read articles for different levels of understanding

Avoid rabbit holes





Some ideas to move you along in your literature review

- 
1. Make an outline of your Literature Review (funnel)
 2. Simple rule of thumb – 3 to 4 articles per section
 3. Have a good organizational schema
 4. Look for gaps, then find targeted articles
 5. Organize your references as you go

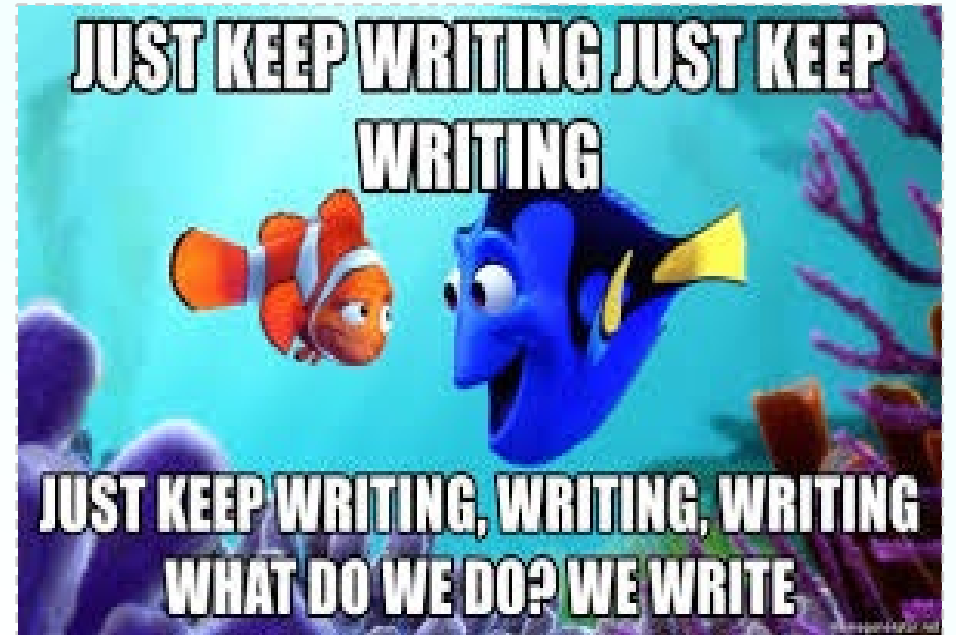
Writing up your Proposal

Your first sentence does not need to be brilliant

Avoid the blinking cursor on the blank page


Writing more is not always better


I must not delete anything I have written; I must talk about every study I have read







Some ideas to starting and finishing your proposal

- 
1. Schedule time for writing
 2. Use resources to help you organize
 3. Set reasonable deadlines, and communicate them
 4. It is okay to jump around in your writing
 5. Use snippets from other papers and assignments



Some ideas to move you along in completing your proposal

- 
1. Finalize your research/guiding questions
 2. Methodology – detailed like a recipe
 3. Once you have a draft, review and look for gaps
 4. Fine tune your review
 5. Other ideas?
- 

Writing up your Final Chapters

I'm sick of my study

I've already said it all

I just want to be finished

My results weren't significant; I don't have anything to say



Some ideas to help you finish strong

1. Use your research questions to guide your results
2. Note interesting points as you write up your results
3. Highlight your findings rather than previous research
4. Revisit the literature (a little)
5. Write more than you think you need

What to do, even when you are not feeling it



Format and check your references

Create a table or figure

Develop your front matter chapters (title page, copyright page, table of contents)

Look up some of those APA style or formatting questions

Schedule writing time with a friend/writing partner

Write in a different setting

Give yourself permission to take a break



What else have you tried that helps you get reenergized?



Questions?

